

FLORIDA STATE ARCHIVES



FLORIDA WOMEN'S ARCHIVES COLLECTION

Division of Archives,
History and Records Management
Florida Department of State
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

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State Library of Florida

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FLORIDA WOMEN'S ARCHIVES COLLECTION

I am today announcing the establishment at my instructions of a "Women's Archives Collection." The special collection will be part of the Florida State Archives in the Department of State.

It will give the women of Florida a central place where documentation of their accomplishments and heritage can be preserved and made available to the public. Many documents of the Suffragette movement are apparently lost forever because something like this was not done in time.

A special place has been set aside for the collection. All papers, tapes, photographs and other documentation will be permanently housed in the new R.A. Gray Archives, Library and Museum Building when it is completed in late 1976.

Mrs. Roxcy Bolton, pioneer feminist of Florida, suggested establishment of this collection over a year ago.

This collection is a State government response to the need of women for overdue recognition and historic documentation of their progress, contributions and heritage.

*Former Secretary of State Richard (Dick) Stone
April 15, 1974*



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THE NEEDS AND THE PROMISE

"The awakening of women in the latter half of the last century, to a new interest in their surroundings, their ambition for a wider and freer personal life and for some participation in the affairs of town and state and nation, met, as was natural, with bitter disapprobation from the conservative masculine portion of the population of these United States. It is with amusement that we recall the manly prejudice and the home courts-martial endured by many of the brave women who organized our first women's clubs in Florida. So long as the innocent "Village Improvement Association" satisfied the wife's longing for a new thrill and nourished her dawning spirit of independence, the nonsense of women's clubs might be stoically endured—provided, also, that a good supper was ready" Lucy Worthington Blackman, 1940.

"The suffrage leaders in Florida had no clerical staff and no office space with facilities for preserving records. The minutes of suffrage meetings, the official records of suffrage activities, and suffrage correspondence were handled like the personal property of the officers responsible All the minutes of suffrage meetings and records have been lost" Kenneth Ray Johnson, 1966.

"It seems clear that, because of traditional neglect of women's contributions, separate libraries are needed now" Eva Moseley, 1972.

The Women's Archives Collection of the Florida State Archives is designed to reflect the lives, in all their complexity and diversity, of the women of Florida; to preserve the records of individual Florida women, as well as Florida women's groups and movements; and to document Florida women's contributions to community, state, and nation.

WOMEN AND FLORIDA HISTORY

Women's lives are complex. A woman draws a delicate thread through many lives, thoughts, and activities. With energy and affection, she weaves family, friend, associate, community, state, and nation into a rich and vari-colored fabric. Through love and service, she creates a garment of special glory.

The thread of the garment is often invisible. Sometimes a woman chooses anonymity behind her husband's name, or serves modestly, veiled in organizational activities. Nonetheless, hers is a singular history—a history still to be written. The Women of Florida will be celebrated. Their history will be written.

The history of Florida is also complex. Though often tangled in the stress of politics, climate, and violent change, the thread of Florida's heritage is unbroken. East Florida, West Florida, territory, state, Confederate ally, and state again, Florida's past is a tapestry of color. Spanish, French, British, American, Indian, Black are all part of an exotic and wonderful design.

Florida was described by Peter Martyr in 1511 as a land of the water of eternal youth; in 1513 Ponce de Leon called it "Pascua Florida," a "Feast of Flowers." It was peopled by the Spanish at Pensacola in 1559, the French at Fort Caroline in 1564. Florida was traded by the Spanish to the British in 1763, traded back to the Spanish by the British in 1783, ceded by the Spanish to the United States in 1819, established as a territory in 1822, and achieved statehood in 1845.

Florida women of five centuries, living their lives under the government of five flags, must be retrieved from the entangling past. Florida women must be rescued from the obscurity of unrecovered and unrecorded history.

This is the purpose and the thrust of the "Women's Archives Collection" program of the Florida State Archives.

FLORIDA WOMEN'S ARCHIVES COLLECTION COLLECTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Personal papers are of great interest to the Florida State Archives, particularly the papers of women who have pioneered in any field or whose lives have been of historical significance. Personal papers include correspondence, documents, diaries, and other types of manuscript material an individual woman collects during her lifetime. Also included in personal papers are articles and books by or about the donor, scrapbooks, and photographs. Such files may relate to her personal life, to professional or official positions, to volunteer activities, and to participation in or observations on events of historical significance.

The Florida State Archives prefers to receive the total accumulation of a woman's files; however, when a donor has already partially committed her papers elsewhere, the Florida State Archives will consider portions of a lifetime collection. Upon occasion, the staff may recommend that certain types of professional working papers, as for example scientific manuscripts or notes, be deposited in a specialized research library in the appropriate field.

Many types of personal papers are suitable for cataloging and research use soon after they are deposited at the Florida State Archives. Others, because of their private nature or the sensitive topics they treat, should be preserved, but closed for a few or many years to research use. The Florida State Archives is happy to discuss the advisability of a partial or total closure of a collection with a donor at any time.

Personal papers may be deposited at the Florida State Archives during a person's lifetime or they can be bequeathed. If a woman intends to bequeath her papers to the Florida State Archives, she should incorporate a clear statement to that effect in her will.

Family collections usually include one or more of the types of papers and records contained in personal

collections. Letters and diaries are especially characteristic. However, family collections differ from personal papers in spanning the activities of persons, both male and female, related by blood or marriage. The family may be descended from or include distinguished persons, or it may be an average American family which has by foresight or chance preserved the records of several generations. Both types of family collections are invaluable historical records for scholars attempting to reconstruct the social, economic, and domestic attitudes and conditions of earlier periods.

Sometimes portions of family collections, especially those relating to living family members, are closed to research use for a period of time.

Organization records constitute another significant part of the Florida State Archives. These include the files of Florida women's organizations of all kinds: political, reform, welfare, professional, intellectual, domestic, and social. Also of interest are the records of Florida organizations whose members are both men and women but whose concerns are directed especially toward the needs and interests of women. Organizational records include such diverse material as minutes of meetings, membership lists, reports, correspondence and subject files, scrapbooks, photographs, and publications by or about the organization.

The Florida State Archives preserves the records of currently active organizations as well as those no longer active, although it prefers to assist organizations in the development of their own archival programs.

The Florida State Archives is happy at any time to answer questions from prospective donors about the Florida State Archives, to discuss specific procedures, arrangements, and terms of gifts of papers. Inquiries should be directed to

Robert Williams, director
Division of Archives, History and
Records Management
Department of State
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

HISTORIC WOMEN OF FLORIDA: A SAMPLING

Deaconess Harriet M. Bedell: Christian humanitarian and Episcopalian servant to the Seminole Indians of Florida, at Glade Cross Mission in the Everglades.

Lucy Worthington Blackman: Compiler and editor of first major work on Florida women: *The Women of Florida*, 1940.

Ella C. Chamberlain: First Florida woman to participate in the national Woman's Suffrage Movement.

Nora Clark: Cited in the Works Progress Administration's *Guide to Florida* as the Black woman founder of the first children's day care center in Jacksonville, in the 1860's.

Jeannette Thurber Connor: Extraordinary Florida historian, co-founder of the original Florida State Historical Society, editor and translator of the Spanish records of Florida.

Mamie Eaton Greene: First Florida woman to be elected to a statewide position: Railroad Commission, now the Florida Public Service Commission.

Beth Johnson: First woman to be elected to the Florida Senate.

Ruth Bryan Owen: First Florida woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress.

Rolla A. Southworth: Nationally famous leader, Director of the WPA Social Work program for Florida.

Julia de Forest Tuttle: One of the founders of Miami, ardent supporter of Florida railroad and urban development.

FLORIDA WOMEN'S ARCHIVES COLLECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The prime responsibility of this committee is to advise and help the Florida State Archives in the coordination, statewide, of all efforts to bring meaningful and permanent women's records into the Florida Women's Archives Collection.

Members



Roxcy Bolton

Founding Mother, Feminist Movement in Florida: Charter President, Dade County Chapter, National Organization of Women; founder, Women in Distress, Inc.; founder, Rape Treatment Center in Miami; founder, Institute for Women of Florida International University; founder, Metro Commission (Dade County) on the Status of Women.



Gwendolyn Cherry

Member of Florida House of Representatives, District number 106 (Dade County). First Black woman elected to the Florida Legislature; authority on the Black history of Dade County.



Mary Grizzle

Member of Florida House of Representatives, District number 53 (Pinellas County). Authority on the family, its rights and duties.

This public document was promulgated at an annual cost of \$219.88 or 10.9 cents per copy to inform citizens of the Florida Women's Archives Collection and provide information concerning policy and procedure on how citizens can contribute to the collection.